

At page 10, line 22, after "processor 40" insert -- as illustrated in Figure 8--.

At page 10, line 30 delete "the".

At page 11, line 29 change "system□s" to "system's".

At page 12, line 13 delete "and".

At page 15, line 2, delete "the recharge to".

In the Claims:

Cancel claims 1-34.

Amend claims 35, 40, and 48 as follows.

Sub B1
a1
~~35. (Amended) A system for effecting electronic payment for goods or services comprising:~~

~~a terminal located at a point-of-sale where monetary consideration is received from or on behalf of an end-user to pre-pay for selected goods or services; the terminal operable to exchange electronic messages with a financial network;~~

~~a financial network operable to exchange electronic messages with the point-of-sale terminal;~~

~~a payment processor including a database for storing a list of participating point-of-sale merchants and further including a database associating a plurality of intermediary account numbers with corresponding end-user account numbers; and~~

~~the payment processor operable to exchange electronic messages with the terminal via the financial network and including means for [posting a payment transaction] crediting an indicia of monetary value to a corresponding intermediary account in response to receiving a payment message from the point-of-sale terminal, and further including interface means for communicating at least a recharge transaction to a vendor to credit the associated end-user account in response to [said posting of a point-of-sale payment transaction] crediting the corresponding intermediary account.~~

Sub B2
a2
~~40. (Amended) A method for effecting payment for telephone services comprising:~~

establishing an intermediary account having a corresponding account identifier;

associating the intermediary account with an end-user's prepaid account maintained by a telecommunications vendor;

conducting a transaction comprising receiving a payment from the end-user at a point-of-sale together with the account identifier for loading value into the end-user's prepaid account;

electronically communicating data indicative of the transaction from the point-of-sale to a central payment processor;

in the central payment processor, validating the transaction data and transmitting a response to the point-of-sale; and

in the central processor, if the validating step results in approval of the transaction, crediting a monetary value to the corresponding intermediary account, and sending a message to the telecommunications vendor for loading value into the end-user's associated prepaid account responsive to the payment transaction.

48. (Amended) A method for effecting payment for goods or services comprising:

providing a centralized payment processor;

establishing an intermediary account on the payment processor having a corresponding account identifier;

conducting a payment transaction comprising receiving a payment from the end-user at a point-of-sale together with the account identifier; communicating data indicative of the payment transaction from the point-of-sale to the centralized payment processor via a financial network;

in the payment processor, validating the payment transaction data and transmitting a response to the point-of-sale, said response including an indication of approval if the validating step results in approval of the transaction; and